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An Unusual Observation of 'Homing' To Prey By A Migrating Immature Peregrine Falcon

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On 6 October 1981 at 10:05 EST, while operating a raptor banding station on the Long Island, New York barrier beach, I saw a hatching year female Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) land approximately 50 m from my blind and begin eating a small passerine (probably a White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*, based on feathers). The falcon was on a low, beach heather (*Hudsonia*) covered rise in a broad, open rolling area. Soon after the falcon began eating, an Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), carrying a fish, came over the falcon, vocalizing. The Peregrine flew up and chased the Osprey over the bay to the north, stooping repeatedly at it before flying out of sight. Within 5 min the falcon reappeared on its kill. As the prey was small, cryptically colored, and in a broad, non-descript area of the beach, and since the Peregrine was not seen searching for it, apparently the falcon remembered exactly where it had left its kill and was able to return there from a point out of sight.

Falcons frequently return to cached prey. What is interesting about this incident is that the falcon was a first year migrant and the topography was almost certainly not familiar (the banding station had been manned daily for 3 w prior, and no Peregrines appeared to have been staying in the area). Enderson (Auk. 81:332-352, 1964) described wintering Prairie Falcons (*Falco mexicanus*) leaving their prey on the ground and driving off other raptors in a similar manner. His falcons seldom had difficulty re-locating the prey, but this is not surprising because they were familiar with the area.

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Errata - Raptor Research 18(2)

Page 44 (Table 1 concluded), 0.420^g should appear in the column for shell thickness, 0.49^h should appear in the column for HE and 0.27^h should appear in the column for DDE; page 47, paragraph 3, line 6, > 8 ppm should appear as ≥ 8 ppm; page 61, Literature Cited, the Sawby et al. reference appeared in *Condor* 76:479-481; page 70, photographs are reversed.